

CHAPTER 3

SECTION 15.6

FACET BLOCKS

Issue Date: December 29, 1982

Authority: 32 CFR 199.4(b)(2), (c)(2), and (c)(3)

I. PROCEDURE CODE

62278, 62279, 62282, 62289, 64999

II. DESCRIPTION

The spinal facet block is a diagnostic test and is also a treatment. Both an anesthetic agent and a steroid are injected into the facet joint. The anesthesia is used to eliminate the pain and the steroid acts as an anti-inflammatory agent. By using a facet block, it can be determined if a patient has a partially disrupted facet joint as opposed to a disc problem. This is often a one time procedure, but reinjection may be necessary if the problem returns.

III. POLICY

The spinal facet block is an accepted procedure in the diagnosis of a partially disrupted facet joint or when used to relieve pain and reduce the inflammation in the facet joint.

IV. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Spinal facet block injection is covered when provided by a physician as a diagnostic procedure to determine if the patient has a partially disrupted facet joint or in the treatment of pain related to the facet joint. The CMACs for procedure codes 62278 and 62289 include the cost for the medication.

B. If there are multiple injections on a single day or there is any question of over-utilization of the facet injections, the case should be referred to medical review. If more than one injection is approved by medical review, injections shall be paid according to multiple surgical procedures for unrelated conditions.

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